



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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JACKSON RESPONDS TO LaHOOD AIRPORT COMMENTS, CALLS ON QUINN TO ACT

Today, Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. released the following statement:

"It was reported yesterday that U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood suggested that nobody had contacted him in his two years as Secretary regarding the long-debated third airport that is ready to be built just south of Chicago. What he must have meant to say is that nobody from the Governor's office or IDOT has talked to him about the third airport. I met at-length with Secretary LaHood in Washington to discuss the airport on February 25, 2009, along with representatives of the Abraham Lincoln National Airport Commission (ALNAC) and one of the developers who is ready to build the airport with private funds.

"I also spoke with Secretary LaHood this morning and he acknowledged our 2009 breakfast meeting at the U.S. Department of Transportation and the fact that we have spoken many times over the years about the airport in both his role as Secretary and during his time in Congress. He told me that nobody from Governor Quinn's staff or from IDOT has talked to him about the airport since he took office as Secretary of Transportation, despite their frequent conversations on other transportation projects for Illinois such as high-speed rail. This is disappointing, but not surprising, since we have not been able to get Governor Quinn to give final go-ahead for the airport.

"Following the meeting with Secretary LaHood, the Federal Aviation Administrations' Acting

Commissioner wrote to me saying, 'It is the State's responsibility to decide how the airport should be planned, designed, financed and managed. Only the State can decide whether, when and how to involve another entity or cosponsor.' This is precisely why the Governor must make a decision so that the Commission and its developers can meet with the Department of Transportation and the FAA immediately. This decision, according to Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, does not require legislative approval and can be made by the Governor alone.

"The Abraham Lincoln National Airport is the ultimate shovel-ready project. It can be built now, with no investment of government money, and will create 1,000 construction jobs and 15,000 permanent jobs by the time it opens for business. Ultimately this airport will be responsible for hundreds of thousands of jobs for Chicago and the Illinois economy," said Jackson, who added that the private development team recently extended its contract for four more years.

"Governor Quinn told the Southtown Star in September, 'I would wager that the airport, if I'm elected on Nov. 2, will move forward very quickly. If I'm not elected, forget it.'

"So, hearing that, the south suburbs came out in huge numbers for Gov. Quinn, and he was re-elected largely due to our community's support. I am hopeful that the Governor will indeed take action very quickly to get the project going, as he promised. That way he can truly be the 'Jobs Governor.' The time to act is now," Jackson concluded.

Note to reporters:

Attached, you will find the following, totaling 8 pages:

1. A letter from the FAA Administrator following the February 25, 2009 meeting with Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood regarding the Abraham Lincoln National Airport
2. Diagrams of the future Abraham Lincoln National Airport, which were presented to Secretary LaHood on February 25, 2009

3. Recent coverage by the Southtown Star regarding the status of the third airport, and Governor Quinn's pre-election comments

4. Two New York Times columns by Bob Herbert regarding the unprecedented opportunity that Illinois has to build the Abraham Lincoln National Airport

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